Orson Brown was a kindly man—a man without guile. He was never known to raise his voice in anger. He said that some people didn’t care what others thought of them, but he did; and he always lived accordingly, being kind to everyone. He never turned anyone away, but made them welcome at his home.

Orson was the 2nd child of Homer Brown and Hannah Eliza Woolf and was born in Nephi, Juab County, Utah, 14 Oct. 1858.

He used to tell how they lived in a fort there, and that he and some others boys would get up on the roof and throw rocks at the Indian boys on the ground; then the Indian boys would throw rocks back at them. They lived in Nephi until 1862, then moved to Salt Lake City, where they lived on a farm until 1881.

There was a piece of ground (160 acres) for sale out in Taylorsville (now Bennion Ward). This ground had been a dry farm, taken up by Orson Hyde, one of the Twelve. So Homer Brown and William Parker decided to buy it, each taking half. William Parker took the south half and Homer took the north half. They built their homes there; William on the top of the hill (not really a hill, just the way the land lay). Homer down below the canal (of course, there wasn’t a canal there then). Their homes were close and both families were large, as was the custom then. One time, Pres. Hugh B. Brown talked about these families and said they were all like one big family. In those days, instead of building the homes out front, they were built clear in the back. The Brown home has been torn down, but the Parker home still stands and is in use.

As it turned out, brothers married sisters. Orson Brown married Alice Parker and Arthur Brown married Nettie Parker.

But prior to this time, Orson found out that if he went to Arizona, he could get a job there; so he did. He spent one summer there working on a railroad and made enough money to buy a team of horses and a wagon to bring him home. But first, he was so close to the Mexican line that he decided to have a look at Old Mexico. There he made friends with a man who asked him if he was going to make the long trip back to Utah alone. Orson said, “Yes.”

He said, “Have you got a gun?” Orson told him that he didn’t, to which the man replied, “You can’t make that trip without a gun.” So he gave him his—an old cap and ball 1861 Navy revolver. Orson said it was a “good shooting gun” and came in very handy to shoot sage hens to keep up the food supply.

Orson married Sarah Alice Parker 3 July 1884. They were later sealed to each other 2 May 1888.

Orson had obtained 7 ½ acres of ground just north of the old home in Bennion Ward. A canal was later built that ran right through Orson’s ground. 6 acres were below the canal and 1 ½ acres were above the canal. Orson built his new home just below the canal: 2 rooms were made of brick and one room of lumber. He later built another room onto the frame room, making an extra bedroom. This was their home from that time on; they never left it. Both died there and were buried in the Taylorsville Memorial Gardens.

For a long time, Orson worked at the Highland Boy Smelter in Murray. After that, every fall he would work for the Parker Brothers on their threshing machine. He would haul water with his team for the steam engine that ran the thresher. Orson worked his farm in the summer and in the winter would drive the school bus, taking the children to school in Taylorsville.
One day, when Orson was working on the thresher (it was an old-time horsepower), he was feeding the machine by hand. Men would pitch the wheat up on the table, one on each side, and Orson would push it in the feeder. He caught his right hand in the gears, cutting off 3 fingers and leaving his hand with only the thumb and next finger. This greatly reduced the use of his right hand throughout the remainder of his life.

At one time, Orson bought 5 acres of ground just north of his farm down below the canal from his neighbor (an alcoholic) for $500—a great deal of money in those days. Before Orson could do anything about it, the neighbor spent the money for alcohol, then fenced all the land into his farm. Orson didn’t have anything to show he had bought the ground, but said he had thought the man’s word was as good as his bond.


In addition to their own 4 children, Orson and Alice raised one more child, Leah Eliza Bird, a daughter of Edward LeRoy Bird and Ethel Belle Brown, Orson’s sister. Leah’s father had been kicked in the head by a horse, which left him a cripple. He was a young man at the time this happened just a few years after he was married. They had 2 children, Lois J. Bird and Leah Eliza Bird. Leah was the youngest and just a few months old when this accident happened. Edward was sent out to Tooele to live in a home there, where he spent the rest of his life in a wheelchair. Leah died 19 Aug 1909, at only 31 years of age. So Leah was just 9 months old when her mother died and she came to live with Orson and Alice. (Her sister, Lois, went to Arco, Idaho, to live with her Aunt Josie Brown and her husband, Aaron Quist, on their farm.) Orson and Alice raised Leah with all the love and care they gave their own children.

Orson and Alice and their family were very happy living on the farm where they raised almost everything they needed to eat.

About 1915, their oldest son, Ben, heard about some land up in Juniper, Idaho, that could be taken up for dry farming. His uncle, Bert Parker, and the Atwoods were up there, so he decided to go up and take a piece of this ground (320 acres)—but he had to live on it before he could get it. He didn’t have a place to live, so his father went with him and built a log cabin for him. Ben didn’t have to live there in the winter, so he traveled back and forth.

In the spring of 1917, Edith had a chance to go there with her uncle, Bert Parker, so she did. It was there that she met Henry Hewitt Wight. They had a good time that summer chasing around in Henry’s father’s new Ford. The fun didn’t last long, however, as Henry was drafted into World War I. After 2 years he returned home and they were married in the spring of 1920. This was during the depression and the newlyweds didn’t have a place to live, so Orson and Alice took them in for one winter, while Henry worked at the smelter.

Estella married Andrew Jensen 20 June 1923. They had 2 children, Alice Venita and James Andrew. They were sealed in the temple 30 Nov. 1926. Estella died 3 May 1931, at Bennion and Andrew later remarried.

Alice died in the old home 29 March 1923. She was a very kind and loving person and had been completely devoted to Orson and her family.

That left Orson and Ben in the old home. They were both living there when Orson’s mother, Hannah Eliza, died in Thomas, Idaho, 3 Dec. 1927. Her death left Claude, Orson’s
youngest brother, living in Idaho alone, so he came down Bennion and lived with Orson and Ben.

Orson Brown died 12 Aug. 1935, and was buried in the family lot at Taylorsville Memorial Gardens. Claude and Ben later both went to the Salt Lake City General Hospital, where they died—Claude died 15 May 1948, and Ben died 30 Aug 1956.

Henry Hewitt Wight, Son-in-law

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